

A scam in your future?

In the past, fortunetellers have bilked Wisconsin citizens out of thousands of dollars with promises to cure illnesses or resolve love problems. One fortuneteller left the state when a district attorney filed criminal charges.

Now new psychics are in the state via TV, and consumers are complaining again.

The Psychic Enrichment Network offers free readings on a RV infomercial airing on Wisconsin TV stations. But some Wisconsin residents say that when they called in for a free reading they were put on hold for a long time and eventually hung up. A few weeks later they received a call back from the psychic network. The network representative had the consumers' names—apparently from a caller I.D. device—and said a membership would be coming to them in the mail.

When the consumers said they didn't want the membership, they were told they would be receiving information in the mail.

Later, the consumers learned they had been signed up without their permission and would be charged \$19.95 a month on their telephone bills for a psychic voice-mail message.

The Bureau of Consumer Protection says people asked to pay for voice mail they didn't order should contact their telephone company about getting the charges off their bill.

Some psychics exploit people who are experiencing problems and are desperate for solutions. Religion might be used as a means to get to the pocketbook of victims. A fortuneteller may claim to pray or light candles to remove curses from the victim's money. Others use scare tactics, like predicting a terrible accident is going to happen to a family member.

Here are guidelines to use when considering psychics or astrologers:

- Call the Bureau of Consumer Protection to see if there have been complaints: (800)422-7128.
- Be extremely careful of demands to send large sums of cash. Notify police.
- Horoscopes and readings may sound like fun, but if you need help with serious problems, a crystal ball isn't going to help. Consult with clergy or a reputable, qualified counselor.

For more information or to file a complaint, contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection:

(800)422-7128

FAX: (608) 224-4939

TTY: (608) 224-5058

E-mail:

datcphtine@datcp.state.wi.us

WEBSITE:

<http://datcp.state.wi.us/>

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